

Fr. John Reedy



Looking for the Lord

Priest Shortage Easy Answer

I hope the people in the Vatican's Congregation for the Clergy have read Gerry Costello's book, Mission to Latin America.

This Congregation has just issued an appeal for a major redistribution of the world's clergy. Costello, executive editor of The Beacon (Paterson diocese) last year published a book on the effort in the 60s to move large numbers of North American priests and religious into Latin America.

While that effort had some lasting valuable results, it also involved some horrendous blunders which frustrated its goals and which damaged the lives of a lot of generous people.

The current effort states clearly that it is not looking for a simple numerical redistribution. It calls for the establishment of separate commissions, within the various conferences of bishops, to look to the redistribution of clergy domestically and internationally.

I'm sure that the people who prepared this document

recognized many of the mistakes of that earlier effort. Nevertheless, such a program still seems to face immense difficulties.

The most serious, in my opinion, flows from our deepening awareness of how a priest serves a local community of believers.

At an earlier time, we saw his service almost exclusively as the work of administering the sacraments and teaching the doctrinal formulas in which all seminarians were trained.

In recent years, however, we have come to see the priest offering such services as one much more intimately involved in the life, the culture, the problems of the community he serves.

The Liturgy is significantly different when the celebrant is really part of the community which he leads. Sacramental reconciliation takes on a deeper meaning when the proclamation of the Lord's forgiveness comes from a priest who has a real appreciation for the problems, tensions, struggles of the people who present themselves for God's forgiveness.

The world today, with its intense nationalism and its cultural sensitivity, is a much more demanding environment for the

missionary than was the world which accepted colonialism. In many areas, the only way a foreign priest or religious can serve is by committing himself (herself) totally to the local people, by making himself fully available to the service requested by the local church.

That calls for generosity, great generosity, great sensitivity, great adaptability.

Even within our own country, the efforts for a more equitable distribution of priests has not been totally successful. It takes a very special kind of person to move from the Catholicism of Boston or New York to become an effective leader of a community of Catholics in Appalachia or in the Southwest.

There is a psychological as well as a theological truth in that statement in Hebrews that a priest is one taken from the people to act for them in their relations to God.

The shortage of priests in many parts of the world is a very real problem. I hope the Vatican's program can help. I hope it is handled with great prudence and sensitivity.

But I suspect that the need will not be answered by such transfers of personnel. Eventually, the church has to find ways of drawing priests out of their own communities to lead those communities in their pilgrimage to God.

Bolivia Junta Asked: Where Are 11 Priests?

Washington (RNS) — The papal representative in Bolivia has appealed to the Bolivian military junta for information about 11 Roman Catholic priests who have disappeared since the military took over the country on July 17.

The appeal was made July 23 by Archbishop Alfo Rapisarda, the apostolic council, with the support of 30 other foreign diplomats.

The sources said the priests, eight of whom are Jesuits, were arrested in raids on several Catholic parishes soon after the coup. Thus far the junta, led by Gen. Luis Garcia Meza, has not responded to the appeal.

Meanwhile in Washington, Archbishop John R. Quinn of San Francisco, president of the U.S. Catholic bishops conference, has decreed the military takeover as a "tragic rejection of the democratic process: in a letter to the leader of the Bolivian hierarchy.

Archbishop Quinn commended Archbishop Jorge Manrique Hurtado for his "clear denunciation of the violence committed against many innocent persons."

"The suffering people of Bolivia have once more looked to the Church for leadership and the defense of their rights," the American archbishop stated.

Bolivia's ousted president, 50th Jubilee.

Mr. and Mrs. Domenic DiGiulio of Sibley Terrace will renew their wedding vows during the 5 p.m. Mass at Holy Rosary Church on Saturday, Aug. 30. They will be feted by their family at a private gathering.

Lydia Gueiler Tejada, following the coup in the tained political asylum papal nuncio's residence.



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Polish Festival Aug. 8-10

The Ray Serafin Orchestra and the Junior Krakowiaki Dancers are being featured at this year's version of the St. Stanislaus Church parish festival, slated this year for August 8, 9 and 10 on the church grounds at the corner of Hudson and Norton.

Polish Food, including Golumbki, Pierogi and sausage and sauerkraut with rye bread, will be featured at sit-down dinners.

Parking for the event will be supervised at all times, organizers said last week. The festival opens at 6 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and 1 p.m. on Sunday.

Business In Diocese

M. Ramsey Bottros, MD, FRCS, a specialist in obstetrics-gynecology, has established a practice in the Park Ridge Professional Building in Greece. He completed his ob-gyn training at St. Mary's Hospital in June. A native of Egypt, Dr. Bottros is a graduate of Kaser El Ami Medical School in Cairo. He is on staffs at both St. Mary's and Park Ridge Hospital.

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